

The Daily Press

HONGKONG, OCTOBER 27, 1976.

The *Twentieth Century* for August contains no less than three articles bearing on subjects connected with countries east of Suez. Whether this be the result of an increased interest among British politicians in Eastern matters, or of an accident, there is no evidence to show. Of these three articles the one, which will naturally inspire most interest in China, is "The Inheritance of the Great Mogul," by Sir RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, late British Minister at the Court of Peking. This gentleman, since retiring from his post, has sought to bring himself prominently into notice as a great authority on Eastern questions. His claim to such pretensions rests, however, on comparatively slender foundations. As a diplomatist he was considered somewhat of a failure by almost all the British residents in China, and it is pretty well known that his knowledge of Chinese literature was of the most limited description. It is true that though he was no proficient in the language, he understood its value to others, and recommended its study to the English merchants at Shanghai, sage advice which they doubtless fully appreciated. But it is unlikely that he or any other British community in China would allow Sir RUTHERFORD ALCOCK's claim to speak with very much authority on affairs in China. No doubt the British public will speedily discover, what the residents out here have long known, the incapacity of Sir RUTHERFORD to deal with great public questions. His article in the *Twentieth Century*, wonderfully discursive as it is, is, however, devoid of interest, for there is much imported matter in it not uninteresting in itself.

Sir RUTHERFORD has, it is apparent, taken Colonel Yule's book as a peg on which to hang his own observations. These are of a decidedly speculative character, and it is somewhat difficult to find out the conclusions he arrives at. This is increased by Sir RUTHERFORD's go-off-at-word propensity, which often confuses his readers. After a patient and careful perusal of an incoherent article—a patchwork cover without design or aim—we have at length arrived at this: Before doing so, it was necessary to excise some pages of irrelevant matter regarding the genius, language, and antiquity of the Chinese people; much duplicate verbiage, meaning nothing, concerning the balance of power in Central Asia, needed pruning; and a variety of speculations about the advance of a Chinese army from behind the angle of the Great Wall had to be sifted, before the balance could be struck and the net result ascertained. This in effect would appear to be somewhat as follows: Sir RUTHERFORD considers that England, Russia, and China are the joint heirs of the Great Mogul conquests, and that, as is usual with the inheritors of a divided estate, they are disagreeing with regard to their share of the inheritance. From China, England has little to fear, though she is advancing an army from behind "the angle of the Great Wall," which may possibly curtail British trade a little. Russia—the Great White Khan—is, or should be, the source of anxiety to England. The trade but hardly and warfare tribes of Central Asia, he tells us, being civilised to some extent by the Muscovite Government. Russia, again, for the extension of her commerce, is building cities, making roads over glaciers and mountain passes, and employing these tribes in the construction of works which would prove equally—if but more—essential in war as in time of peace. CHINA'S KHAN and THURVA have crossed mountain chains and mighty rivers before; what, then, is to prevent another, and perhaps more formidable, gathering of these hordes together, under Russian leadership, marching down the valleys of the Himalaya, finding India at their feet, and the best European troops and generals almost powerless to oppose them?

Sir RUTHERFORD ALCOCK evidently regards little reliance in the valour and efficiency of the British army in India. He undoubtedly under-estimates the difficulties in the path of an invading force. There is no occasion for uneasiness on the score of a Russian invasion of India. Of course it is well for England to look that her arms be bright, and be prepared for any eventuality, but it is very doubtful whether Russia ever cherished any serious designs upon our Eastern Empire. In justice to Sir RUTHERFORD, it must be said that after making this alarming suggestion, he afterwards expresses the opinion that the Northern Colossus is more likely to seek a southern outlet for her trade in the Gulf of Persia than through India or China. The former would prove too hard a nut to crack; the latter is too big and indigestible a morsel to swallow. After all there is nothing new in Sir RUTHERFORD's article. We have had alarmist articles on the Eastern question *ad libitum*, and the same theories have more or less persuaded them. It is now pretty generally understood that Russia is not satisfied with her present "Aboda de Shew," and would claim some territory in more general regions. She sighs, too, for the riches of the south, for the outlets they afford for trade, and which are now closed to her. When the opportunity comes she will certainly endeavour to secure some outlet, and the weakest country will certainly become her prey. But England need not feel much anxiety on this score, though, of course, it is necessary she should watch the movements of her big neighbour and rival in Asia. The latter will always be found ready to profit from any complications or struggles that may arise in the East. English statesmen are, however, we believe, well acquainted with the fact, and it needs not the Cassandra-like pen of a Sir RUTHERFORD ALCOCK to rouse them to a sense of the position.

The actual receipts from six sales of Bengal opium and five months' duty on Malwa opium have exceeded the estimated receipts by £221,642. This is entirely due to Bengal opium, as the Malwa opium duty has been less than the estimate by £46,157.

The San Francisco Tea market on the 26th August was well supplied with both Chinese and Japanese. Oolong tea, of the former, at all times commands the market, while each and every import has its own brand of paper tea, of which it makes a specialty. Auction prices largely rule as for Standard Japanese, 15 coffee,

The ship *Hallion* left San Francisco for Manila on the 24th August.

The bark *Marion* arrived at San Francisco on the 26th August to discharge her Hongkong cargo.

A Government notification has been published in one of the Manila journals, confirming the report of the intended construction of railways in the Philippines.

We are requested to state that the man Ferdinand Lopez, charged at the Police Court on Monday with being drunk, is not employed at Captain Sande's Ship.

H.M.S. *Albatross* went round the Island yesterday to try her engines. The Surveyor General went on board and proceeded on his way to try the Green Island Light.

We observe that one of our Indian contemporaries has made an attempt in his *Indian Statesman* to belittle the *Statesman*. This change was effected on the 14th ult.

Messrs. Butterfield & Swire yesterday morning received a telegram from the O.S.S. Co.'s steamer *Neer* is ashore outside Amoy, and that assistance has been sent to her.

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which actually prohibits any action before registration, could hardly be applied to meet local circumstances. It would be making no distinction between old law and new, and there is no reason why the old law should be applied to the new. The new law, which is now in force, is the law of the Colony. It is the law of the Colony, and it is the law of the Colony.

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